

# FACT SHEET

## Oil and Gas Drilling Ordinance

### Summary

Pursuant to a Mayoral and City Council directive, Los Angeles City Planning drafted a proposed citywide ordinance that would prohibit new oil and gas extraction and make existing extraction activities a nonconforming use in all zones. Upon Council adoption and Mayoral signature, the ordinance would immediately ban new oil and gas drilling and put an end to existing operations after a 20-year amortization period.

### Background

Studies show that activities related to oil and gas operations have been associated with many potential negative health and safety impacts, especially when they occur in close proximity to sensitive uses such as homes, schools, places of worship, recreation areas, and healthcare facilities. Consistent with the City's policies on climate change, Los Angeles is introducing regulations that would phase out oil activities altogether, improving the City's overall livability while addressing long-standing injustices to frontline communities and communities of color disproportionately affected by the health impacts of drill sites.

### Key Provisions

The proposed ordinance aims to:

- Ban new oil and gas drilling activities citywide
- Cease and remove all existing oil operations within a 20-year timeline

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What does the proposed ordinance do?

The ordinance would amend the Los Angeles Municipal Code to phase out oil drilling in the City by (1) immediately banning new oil and gas extraction and (2) requiring the cessation of all existing oil and gas operations within a 20-year period.

### What does the ordinance mean for existing operators?

The ordinance will make existing oil operations legally nonconforming uses, subject to a 20-year amortization period. This means that existing drill sites may continue to operate for up to 20 years after which time all drilling related activities must cease. This 20-year period is currently stipulated in the Los Angeles Municipal Code.

### Why are existing operators given time to phase out their operations?

The amortization period allows operators to recoup their capital investments in oil drilling activities prior to instituting plans for the decommissioning of existing wells. The Mayor and Los Angeles City Council directed the Office of Petroleum and Natural Gas Administration and Safety (OPNGAS) to prepare an amortization study. Depending on the results of this study, there may be future code amendments requiring individual wells to shut down sooner, in instances when the operator may recoup their investments prior to the proposed 20-year amortization period as stipulated under this ordinance.

### How many oil and gas sites are there in the City?

In Los Angeles, there are 26 oil and gas fields and more than 5,000 oil and gas wells (active and idle, with some of them abandoned). Wells are found in nearly all parts of the City including but not limited to Wilmington, Harbor Gateway, Downtown, West Los Angeles, South Los Angeles, and the Northwest San Fernando Valley.

### Can operators maintain their wells during the amortization phase?

Well servicing activities such as replacement of tanks, appurtenant structures, and equipment would not be affected by this ordinance. Maintenance activities such as, but not limited to, acid treatment, reworking, and sidetracking would not be permitted once this ordinance becomes effective.



### **Who will ensure that operators stop drilling and properly remove their oil wells after the amortization phase?**

There are several State and local regulations/agencies (outside of the purview of City Planning's jurisdiction) that govern abandonment and remediation efforts, including the California Geologic Energy Management Division, Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the South Coast Air Quality Management District. City Council tasked OPNGAS with drafting a new City policy to ensure proper plugging and abandonment of wells and comprehensive site remediation to be completed within 3-5 years of those sites ceasing active oil production, with the intention of ensuring oil companies bear the responsibility for abandonment and remediation.

### **What is the anticipated timeline for adoption of the proposed ordinance?**

The proposed ordinance is expected to advance through the legislative process later this fall, at which time it will be considered by the City Planning Commission (CPC). Following CPC's consideration, the City Council will need to adopt, and the Mayor will need to sign, this ordinance.

### **What is the best way to submit comments?**

To ask questions or submit comments and feedback, please contact the Oil Regulation Code Amendment Unit at [planning.oildrilling@lacity.org](mailto:planning.oildrilling@lacity.org) or (213) 978-3094.

### **How can I stay informed on the progress of this ordinance?**

To request to be added to an interested parties list, please email the Oil Regulation Code Amendment Unit at [planning.oildrilling@lacity.org](mailto:planning.oildrilling@lacity.org).